

Message Text

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 00025 311432Z

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ACTION NEA-13

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 EB-11 OPIC-12 SSO-00 NSCE-00

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PRS-01 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 DODE-00 CIEP-02 COME-00

TRSE-00 STR-08 NEAE-00 XMB-07 DRC-01 /136 W

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 025

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 0025

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: SYRIAN DIPLOMAT ON FOREIGN MINISTRY REORGANIZATION,
BETTER INVESTMENT CLIMATE AND VISIT OF FRENCH FOREIGN
MINISTER

1. ON JAN 28 WHILE IN FOREIGN MINISTRY, I RAN INTO RAFIQ
JOUEJATI FORMERLY OF SYRIAN MISSION TO UN AND NOW IN
DAMASCUS SERVING AS HEAD OF WESTERN EUROPEAN DEPARTMENT. HE
IS ALSO RESPONSIBLE FOR ADMINISTRATIVE REORGANIZATION OF
SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY.

2. JOUEJATI, WHO WAS GENUINELY PLEASE TO SEE ME, TOLD ME THAT
HE IS PRESENTLY IN PROCESS OF REORGANIZING FORMIN IN TERMS OF (A)
PERSONNEL POLICIES, (B) REPORTING RESPONSIBILITIES, (C) ORGANI-
ZATIONAL PATTERNS, AND (D) OVERALL POLICY GUIDELINES.
JOUEJATI SAID THAT PRESENT SYRIAN REGIME HAS NOW APPARENTLY
REALIZED VALUE OF STRONG AND WELL OPERATED FORMIN AND HAS
GIVEN HIM AUTHORITY TO MAKE ANY REFORMS HE DEEMS FIT. IN
THIS REGARD, JOUEJATI STATED HE BELIEVES SYRIA "WILL NOW BE
USING DIPLOMACY MORE THAN IT HAS IN THE PAST". JOUEJATI ASKED
ME FOR ANY PUBLICATIONS, PAMPHLETS, ORGANIZATIONAL CHARTS,
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PAGE 02 BEIRUT 00025 311432Z

PERSONNEL PROCEDURES WHICH DEPT HAS DEVELOPED AND WHICH MIGHT
BE AVAILABLE TO HIM TO HELP HIM IN HIS PRESENT WORK. I
PROMISED I WOULD SEE WHAT I COULD DO.

3. JOUEJATI ALSO COMMENTED THAT EVEN THOUGH HE HAS BEEN BACK IN SYRIA FOR ONLY SHORT TIME, HE SENSES THAT THERE HAS BEEN MAJOR CHANGE IN VARIOUS POLICIES OF THE REGIME. FOR EXAMPLE, HE SAID THAT THERE IS NOW "BETTER CLIMATE" FOR FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN SYRIA AND THIS IS DEMONSTRATED BY LIFTING OF ALMOST ALL RESTRICTIONS PREVIOUSLY PLACED ON SUCH ACTIVITIES. JOUEJATI SAID HE HAD HEARD THAT REMAINING RESTRICTIONS WOULD ALSO SOON BE LIFTED.

4. JOUEJATI WAS BUSY PREPARING FOR VISIT OF FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTER JOBERT AND POINTED TO PILE OF POSITION PAPERS WHICH HE AND HIS STAFF HAD BEEN WORKING ON. HE SAID THAT FOR THIS VISIT SYRIAN OFFICIALS HAD SPENT CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF TIME DRAWING UP PAPERS LISTING SPECIFIC REQUESTS WHICH SYRIANS ARE TO MAKE OF FRENCH. JOUEJATI CONTINUED THAT NO LONGER WILL SYRIANS ENTER INTO BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS MOUTHING VAGUE PLATITUDES. JOUEJATI JOKINGLY SAID THAT SYRIANS EXPECT TO HEAR MUCH "ANTI-AMERICAN" TALK BY THE FRENCH.

5. COMMENT: JOUEJATI WAS GOOD SOURCE OF INFORMATION WHEN I WAS AT UNGA IN 1971 AND I HOPE I WILL HAVE OPPORTUNITY TO SEE HIM OFTEN IN FUTURE, IF ONLY IN FORMIN. HE WAS HIS USUAL VOLUBLE, FRIENDLY AND OUTGOING SELF. AS HE TOLD ME SEVERAL TIMES DURING CONVERSATION HE AND OTHERS IN MINISTRY WHO HAVE LONG WORKED FOR IMPROVED US-SYRIAN RELATIONS ARE ENCOURAGED BY RECENT DEVELOP-

MENTS AND THAT FORMIN CAREERISTS ARE NOW REASONABLY OPTIMISTIC ABOUT SYRIA'S FUTURE AS WELL AS THEIR OWN. BECAUSE THERE WERE PEOPLE COMING IN AND OUT OF ROOM DURING CONVERSATION, I DID NOT HAVE TIME TO QUESTION HIM AT LENGTH ON SPECIFIC MATTERS BUT I INTEND TO SEE HIM AGAIN IN NEAR FUTURE. IN THIS REGARD, ANY PUBLICATIONS DEPT CAN PROVIDE RE ORGANIZATIONAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES AT STATE WOULD BE USEFUL IN PERMITTING ME TO FOLLOWUP WITH JOUEJATI AGAIN.

SCOTES

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